The demand for medical writing professionals is growing significantly. So, too is the supply of individuals with advanced biomedical and life science degrees looking for careers outside academia. Given these facts, an Advisory Board of seasoned medical writing professionals has guided the development of a Medical Writing Certificate program at the University of California, San Diego. The program is designed to provide graduates with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to work as a medical writer in the commercial sector, government agencies and/or academia. The certificate will equip scientists and others with a strong biomedical and/or life sciences background to write specifically for scientific audiences.

**Certificate Benefits**

The certificate prepares students to secure well-paying positions as medical writers in four distinct specialty areas:

- Continuing Medical Education materials
- Scientific Grants
- Regulatory Writing
- Journal Article and Publication Development

Medical writing offers a rewarding and intellectually stimulating career, with six-figure salaries for senior writers.

Many medical writers manage their own freelance businesses.

Scientific Medical Writing vs. Non-Scientific Medical Writing: The program is not designed for those intending to communicate scientific information to lay audiences, e.g., science journalism, marketing communications or patient communications. This program is designed to equip scientists and others with a strong biomedical and/or life sciences background to write for scientific audiences in peer-reviewed journals, regulatory documents, medical education materials and/or research grant proposals.

Who should take the certificate? Accepted applicants will have graduate degrees in biomedical or life sciences, such as biology, chemistry, pharmacy, nursing, nutrition, medicine or public health. PhDs are particularly competitive for medical writing positions in the commercial sector and academic settings.

**Program Details**

- Number of courses: 6 core courses and 8 units of electives
- Total units: 23
- Estimated cost: $4,000 +/-
- Time to Complete: 12-18 months
- Delivery: fully online
Course Expectations

In order to receive your certificate, you must complete all of the required coursework with a B-/80% or higher.

Conditions for Admission

Successful applicants must have relevant educational background, and native-level fluency in English with the demonstrated ability to write clear, logical, and grammatically correct sentences as evidenced by the application, official transcripts and writing samples. Accepted applicants will have degrees in biomedical or life sciences, such as biology, chemistry, pharmacy, nursing, nutrition, or public health. It is anticipated that many will have advanced degrees, including PhDs. Candidates with PhDs are particularly competitive for medical writing positions in the commercial sector and academic settings.

Non-Native English speakers must provide proof of English language competency via either a score of 90 on the iBT (TOEFL) test or a 7.5 on the IELTS test.

Upon acceptance into the Medical Writing Certificate Program, all students must either take the following three courses or have taken appropriate equivalents within the past five years, earning a grade of B- or better:

- Medical Terminology: An Anatomy and Physiology Approach FPM-40172 (1.5 unit)
- CT: Practical Clinical Statistics for the Non-Statistician FPM-40233 (2 units)
- Grammar Lab WCWP-40234 (3 units)

All prerequisites must be completed in the Fall or Spring quarter in order to begin the certificate program in a timely manner. All three prerequisites are available online and can all be taken together in a single quarter.

Prerequisites can be waived for individuals whose work experience demonstrates foundational knowledge of these subjects. Applicants seeking this waiver must email their CV to rhoughtaling@ucsd.edu for determination in advance of their application.

The Medical Writing Certificate core classes begin during either the Winter or Summer quarters only. All required courses and electives must be completed before enrolling in the final class, Capstone Project. Students can choose to follow the Traditional Course Schedule (a track designed for working professionals who plan to take one to two courses per quarter, finishing the program in 18 months) or the Accelerated Course Schedule (the quickest possible track, 12 months). Apart from the specific quarter availability of particular courses, these schedules are flexible and can be rearranged to fit a student’s personal needs.